U.S. Environmental Protection Agency **May 2000**
1998 TOXICS RELEASE INVENTORY (TRI) **http://www.epa.gov/tri**

This information packet contains charts and tables which summarize the 1998 toxic chemical release and other waste management data reported to EPA's Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) Program under the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA) and the Pollution Prevention Act (PPA). The Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) data is summarized from a national perspective as well as by State and by industry. The TRI provides the public with information on toxic chemical releases from industrial facilities in their communities. Users should review the scope of the data and factors to consider when using the TRI information. Since this data reflects releases for 1998, users concerned about the most current information on facility releases in their communities should check with those facilities directly since technological and process changes could have altered their release estimates since 1998.

There are now approximately 650 chemicals and chemical categories for which reporting is required under the Toxics Release Inventory Program. From 1987 through 1997 only manufacturing facilities were required to report their releases and other waste management to TRI. 1998 marks the first year of reporting from a new group of industries that must now report as well. These new industries include metal mines, coal mines, electrical utilities, commercial hazardous waste treatment facilities, chemical wholesalers, petroleum bulk terminals, and solvent recovery services. Federal facilities have been required to report their releases since 1994.

Citizens can access TRI information on toxic chemical releases and other waste management from particular facilities, in particular communities, and by individual chemical through the TRI web site at **http://www.epa.gov/tri**. The TRI web site provides links to TRI data access tools, including a new, user-friendly tool called the TRI EXPLORER. The web site also includes information on TRI requirements, chemicals reported, TRI reports, chemical hazard information, and contacts.

Understanding the Scope of TRI Data and Factors to Consider When Using TRI Data

The TRI Program has given the public unprecedented direct access to toxic chemical release and other waste management data at the local, state, regional, and national level. Use of this information can enable the public to identify potential concerns, gain a better understanding of potential risks, and work with industry and government to reduce toxic chemical releases and the risks associated with them. When combined with hazard and exposure data, this information can allow informed environmental priority-setting at the local level.

Federal, state, and local governments can use the data to compare facilities or geographic areas, to identify hot spots, to evaluate existing environmental programs, to more effectively set regulatory priorities, and to track pollution control and waste reduction progress. TRI data, in conjunction with demographic data, can help government agencies and the public identify potential environmental justice concerns.

Industry can use the data to obtain an overview of the release and other waste management of toxic chemicals, to identify and reduce costs associated with toxic chemicals in waste, to identify promising areas of pollution prevention, to establish reduction targets, and to measure and document progress toward reduction goals. Public availability of the data has prompted many facilities to work with communities to develop effective strategies for reducing environmental and human health risks posed by toxic chemical releases.

While the TRI data provides the public, industry, and state and local governments with an invaluable source of key environmental data, there are some factors that should be considered when using the TRI data:

- Users of TRI information should be aware that TRI data reflect releases and other waste management of chemicals, not the exposures or the risk to the public from those releases or other wastes. Release estimates alone are not sufficient to determine exposure or to calculate potential adverse effects on human health and the environment. Other exposure and hazard data, in conjunction with TRI data, should be used to estimate risks. This other information includes chemical form, the stability of the chemical in the environment, the potential for bioaccumulation, the environmental medium (e.g., air or water) to which the chemical is released, potential degradation or persistence of the chemical in the environment, populations or species exposed, level of exposure, and hazard information. Hazard data simply indicates whether a chemical can cause an adverse effect on human health or the environment, and therefore, cannot be used without other key exposure-related information to estimate the risks associated with chemical releases.

- Data is only collected from certain industrial sectors, including manufacturers, metal mining, coal mining, electric utilities, petroleum bulk terminals, chemicals wholesalers, RCRA commercial hazardous waste treatment, and solvent recovery; federal facilities report to TRI regardless of their industrial classification. Although TRI is successful in capturing information on a significant portion of toxic chemicals currently being used by covered industry sectors, it does not cover all toxic chemicals or all industry sectors. For instance, TRI does not include toxic emissions from cars and trucks, nor from the majority of sources of releases of pesticides, volatile organic compounds, fertilizers and many other non-industrial sources.

- Facilities report estimated data to TRI, and the program does not mandate that they monitor their releases. Various estimation techniques are used when monitoring data are not available, and EPA has published estimation guidance for the regulated community. Variations between facilities can result from the use of different estimation methodologies. These factors should be taken into account when considering data accuracy and comparability.

- The TRI report alone does not indicate whether the facility's release is legal. These releases must be compared with applicable permits to evaluate whether the facility is in compliance with other environmental regulations. Many of the releases included in the TRI report are permitted by EPA and State Regulatory Agencies.